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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### WHAT CHRISTMAS MAY MEAN TO US ALL

THE Christmas season this year seems to bring with it promise of greater prosperity to us as a nation. We have once more been through the upheaval of a presidential election and once more have reason to believe that our government is in judicious hands. In some of our states the issue has been one for honesty, higher standards, righteousness and decency. To show the significance of such issues, we cannot do better than to quote from one of President Roosevelt's wise utterances made during the past year in which he says:

"On behalf of all our people, on behalf no less of the honest man of means than of the honest man who earns each day's livelihood by that day's sweat of his brow, it is necessary to insist upon honesty in business and politics alike, in all walks of life, in big things and in little things; upon just and fair dealing as between man and man. . . . In the work we of this generation are in there is, thanks be to the Almighty, no danger of bloodshed and no use for the sword; but there is grave need of those stern qualities shown alike by the men of the North and the men of the South in the dark days when each valiantly battled for the light as it was given each to see the light. This spirit should be our spirit, as we strive to bring nearer the day when greed and trickery and cunning shall be trampled under feet by those who fight for the righteousness that exalteth a nation."

Those of our subscribers who are regular readers of *The Outlook* will pardon us for using as our Christmas message a few lines from Dr. Lyman Abbott which appeared recently, which carry on this thought.

"All men are seeking happiness; but they do not understand the secret of happiness. It does not depend on our conditions or our possessions, but on our character; not on what we have or where we are,

but on what we are. The way to enjoy the world is not, Get all you can and keep all you get, but, Give good measure, pressed down and running over, for with what measure you mete men will measure to you again. The way to enjoy the world is to give yourself unselfishly to the service of your fellowmen, and take as a free inheritance what life brings to you; it is the meek who inherit the earth. . . . The way to please God is not by sacrificing oxen and doves to him in the Temple, but by sacrificing your own inclinations, that you may better serve His children in their need. The heretic who goes after the robbed and wounded traveller is more religious than the priest or the Levite who hurries by to the Temple service. In the last great day God will not ask, What church did you attend? or, What creed did you subscribe to? but, Did you feed the hungry and visit the sick and the imprisoned? Service is the end of life and the test of character, and he that is ambitious to be great, let him be the servant of all."

These words, coming from two of our great leaders apply to each of us individually and are commended to the consideration of our readers with the JOURNAL's Christmas greetings.

#### A CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTION

WE want to suggest to those of our readers who may find it difficult to decide upon a Christmas gift for a woman friend, whether a nurse or not, that she send a year's subscription to the JOURNAL; and if she should be in doubt as to the best gift for a child, whether boy or girl, between four and fourteen, she could not make a mistake in sending a subscription to *St. Nicholas*, which has an exceptionally attractive prospectus for the coming year. In fact, there is no more acceptable present in these days than a subscription to any one of the standard magazines. They can be selected to meet the intellectual capacity of almost every class of people. These suggestions are especially applicable to those nurses who are shut in at Christmas time or at a distance from the shopping centres.

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#### A SUGGESTIVE PLAN FOR REORGANIZATION

As the time approaches for the preparation of the program of our two great national gatherings, the date of both having been fixed for the week beginning June 6, we want again to press upon the attention of the committees having this work in hand, the consideration of some

plan for the reorganization and concentration of our national bodies. The work of the secretary in both the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnae is coming to be too great a task for voluntary workers. We have multiplied our organizations since the formation of both of these societies by the addition of county and state associations. The attendance upon meetings, both local and national, with the accompanying financial obligations, is fast becoming a burden. A cry is coming from every section that nurses are called upon to attend too many meetings, and to pay out too much of their hard earned money in travelling expenses, fees, dues, and subscriptions.

We have suggested before, and we reiterate, that we believe the interests of the profession would be better served if we could have a week each year given over to the meetings of our national organizations, to be known as the federation meeting or by whatever name might be agreed upon, with one president for the whole, and with chairmen for the separate affiliated organizations, with one general secretary, who should be a permanent and paid official, giving her entire time to this central organization. Into this week of meetings, interspersed with the general sessions, could be arranged section meetings: one on nursing education, for the teaching body, superintendents and head nurses; one on state board work for members of boards, examiners and inspectors; one on registration for those who have not yet secured laws; one on social work for those engaged in visiting, school, tuberculosis or dispensary work; others on private duty, Red Cross, etc. This would conserve time, energy and money, would bring together all the groups of workers, give opportunity for freer discussions, make the social side, if anything, more interesting, and to the visiting city or state make the meeting vastly more valuable. In other words, has the time not come when we should reorganize somewhat after the form of the American Medical Association?

This would mean one constitution, one full annual report, containing all papers and proceedings, one set of officers, and a treasury sufficiently well filled to meet expenses without so great a tax on the individual member, while those who did the actual hard work could receive some compensation.

We have passed that period of our development when we may be said to have been creeping, and we should now bring the force of our experience to bear upon some plan which shall better serve our needs in the future.

By such a plan no one organization would be subordinated, each one would have its distinct and important place, and the work of each

separate section would be broadened and the benefits more widely distributed by the attendance of the other classes of workers who can now perhaps attend one meeting in several years.

In connection with the national convention, the state in which it is being held could, during the same week, and at the same time, hold its annual meeting, all of its members attending having the benefit of the national and at practically the same cost, as was done in California last year.

This is a subject on which we should like to have a very general discussion in our pages. Let us hear from those who approve as well as those who disapprove, let us have suggestions for a better way, if any has it to offer. If everybody is satisfied with the present arrangement, let us know that also, so that the oft-repeated excuse that our organization life is too complicated may be refuted.

[We did not attend the Toronto meeting, and we had written the above before reading Dr. Goldwater's address, delivered there, which makes similar suggestions for the reorganization of the American Hospital Association.]

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#### PROBLEMS OF PRIVATE DUTY NURSES

IN our last number we published a letter from Miss Louie Croft Boyd, of Denver, in which she discussed the subject of the sliding scale. Miss Boyd has expressed in this letter the personal sentiments of the editor-in-chief. We have in our hands papers relating to this subject read at the San Francisco meeting, written by Mrs. Reba Thelin Foster and Miss Grace Holmes, taking different views of the matter. We propose to publish these two papers in the next number of the JOURNAL and we hope they may give rise to a very active discussion of this most important subject. Every nurse who has an opinion is invited to express it. It is a question concerning the private duty nurses, it cannot be settled by the teaching body, by hospitals, or by directories. It should be included in every alumnæ and organization program during the winter, until we have come to some clear understanding of what the profession needs and moreover what it wants, and how it can more broadly meet the needs of the great middle class. We are drifting away from this subject, which is the most vitally important of all our unsettled problems.

During the winter months we propose to devote the editorial pages and the department of Practical Suggestions very largely to such subjects as concern private duty nurses,—their hours, their pay, criticisms,

just and unjust. We want to hear from our readers individually on these subjects. Those who cannot write for publication, perhaps can pass their ideas on to some one who can, or can send them to us to be used in a general discussion. Our conventions have given us an unusual number of lengthy papers, valuable and instructive. What we need are short pertinent paragraphs that may be classed as practical suggestions.

We do not wish to take up so heavy a subject as nursing education in this Christmas number, but in January we hope to give an outline of the subject as presented at the Toronto meeting.

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#### THE NEW YORK STATE MEETING

THE keynote of the Buffalo meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association was education and social service. We can say with some degree of certainty that there has never before been so large a representation of official delegates and members at any meeting of this association held outside of New York City. The spirit of harmony and cordiality which prevailed made the occasion one of unalloyed pleasure. The absence of Miss Black, chairman of the committee of arrangements, on account of ill health, was the one drawback to the complete carrying out of the program, but her place was ably filled by Dr. Helen Prescott. There was an unusual number of the older women present, with a conspicuous majority of the younger members. We could not help noticing the youthfulness and freshness and appearance of prosperity of both the New York and West Virginia nurses, whom we saw within the same week, as if the cares of life did not weigh heavily upon them, in comparison with members of other bodies of women with whom we are brought in contact frequently, whether political, educational, musical, or philanthropic.

It is impossible to comment on all the papers read, but some of the important ones will appear in these pages later on and will speak for themselves. Each subject was well presented; our only regret is the lack of time for full discussion of a number of the more important matters. This is getting to be a fault in all of our programs, and we wish we might have a convention where there would be only two subjects presented at a session.

We call special attention to the report of the training-school inspector, Miss Alline, which shows the hours of duty of the nurses in our hospitals.

Miss Palmer's paper, which will not be published, dealt principally with the educational side of state registration, and contained some figures of interest. It was shown that a total of 217 training schools, both within and without the state, are registered with the Regents, and that approximately 10,000 pupils are in training in these schools, which is one-half the number given by the National Bureau of Education as being in training in the whole country. When we take into consideration the operation of registration laws in the other eleven states beside New York, we realize that very rapidly the nursing centres of the country are being brought under some degree of educational influence leading to greater uniformity. While we may be disheartened by the difficulties that are impeding our progress in many directions, the fact remains that through education we are gradually lifting ourselves to a higher professional status, and that before the culture that education brings many of the most serious defects within the nursing body will melt away.

Miss Nutting, director of the Hospital Economics Course, spoke extemporaneously of that work, what it has to offer, what it is accomplishing, emphasizing the point that the demand for nurses of broad general culture in addition to their technical training cannot be met at the present time. This same point was emphasized in the address of Dr. James W. Putnam in considering the qualifications needed in nurses caring for patients suffering from nervous diseases.

The impression left upon one's mind by the meeting was that nurses are becoming more and more a force in the many lines of social work developing within the state.

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#### CARE OF ONE'S SELF

THERE are many women in the world who know too much about their physical condition for their own or any one else's comfort. They think of it night and day, their little world revolves about it, their whole life is ordered with that in view. We, as nurses, often see such cases, and, in a spirit of revolt at the possibility of ever becoming so self-centred, we try to forget our physical selves and are sometimes careless of our own well-being. There is danger of going too far on the other side. The good nurse, like the good doctor, should be a living example of good health springing from a wise observance of the laws of health.

One of our correspondents asked us recently whether we could not furnish an article on the care which a nurse should give herself

during the menstrual period. Dr. Marion Craig Potter has promised to write something for us on this subject which will, we know, be welcome. A paper read by Dr. Daniel H. Craig, of Boston, at the last meeting of the American Medical Association on "The Menopause" gives some good suggestions in regard to that period. We all know that as, during infancy, all ills are ascribed to teething, so during the ten or fifteen years of a woman's middle life, all nervous or physical disorders are commonly set down to "change of life."

Dr. Craig writes encouragingly of the menopause as a perfectly normal process which, in a well woman, should produce no particular discomfort or ill feelings. Women who are normal should regard this time of life without apprehension. Those who are not well, should give particular attention to any trouble that arises, giving it care and not referring it to this process as an explanation and so letting some disease gain dangerous headway. He thinks both patients and physicians are too apt to let this explanation blind them to the true cause of suffering.

For a person normally constructed there need be no laying aside of work, no prolonged period of inactivity.

The whole address is worth reading and those who have access to medical literature will find it in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for October 31.

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#### A NEW MOVEMENT IN INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

OUR home city of Rochester is to have the first of the so-called trades schools provided for under the Wainwright-Armstrong bill of the New York Legislature last winter. The idea is not, as its name implies, the preparing of boys and girls for the trades, but the provision of a form of education which shall more broadly develop children who leave school at fourteen to become factory operators and to perform mechanically the same kind of monotonous work during practically all their working years.

This is one of the new thoughts in education. The school is to be attended by only such children as voluntarily choose this form of education. There will be one session daily devoted to the usual elementary subjects, with a second session devoted to such work and study as will tend, not only to make a more proficient worker, but to lay the foundation for a broader brain development which shall prevent the child from becoming mentally dwarfed by the monotony of the machine which he operates.



One of the public school buildings will be used for this purpose and the first experiment will be tried with boys, but already the need of such a course for girls is being agitated. We see possibilities in this new idea for a better preparation of girls who are to become nurses.

The board of education in coöperation with the Education Department at Albany is now formulating plans upon which this experiment will be tried as part of the public school system of Rochester.

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#### TUBERCULOSIS MEETING IN NEW YORK

THERE is to be a nurses' session on Tuesday, January 5, in connection with the Tuberculosis Exhibit which is to be in New York during December and part of January. Miss Damer will preside at both sessions, and papers and addresses will be presented by some of our leading tuberculosis workers and others. The program is being arranged by Miss Goodrich and Miss Nutting.

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#### A NEW MAGAZINE

*The Quarterly*, the new magazine of the Graduate Nurses' Association of the State of Pennsylvania, made its first appearance in time for the state meeting in October. It is attractively put forth, with good paper and type and a cover of a very pretty shade of brown. The contents are what are needed by the Pennsylvania nurses for reference in their state work, the minutes of the last two meetings, the proposed bill for registration, and a list of officers and members with addresses.



“O ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
Whose forms are bending low,  
Who toil along the climbing way  
With painful steps and slow!  
Look now, for glad and golden hours  
Come swiftly on the wing:  
Oh, rest beside the weary road,  
And hear the angels sing.”